

TOP SECRET

SECRET INFORMATION

9 October 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: II/OS

SUBJECT: Events Leading up to the Premature Arrival of BOFIEND Covert Aircraft in Greece.

1. Although arrangements of some two weeks standing had been made between the Chief of the FIEND Project in Germany and the Chief of the EDICT () in Greece, scheduling the departure from Germany of the FIEND Covert aircraft for midnight on 13 September and providing for its arrival at Greece in the early morning hours of 14 September, this office received word on 16 September () 2742, IN 41472) that the covert plane had arrived in Greece prematurely at 1900 hours on 13 September and had made a night landing at Eleusis RHAF Airbase.

2. As a result of this premature arrival, the Greek Air Force officer who was briefed to receive the plane was absent from the field at the time. Since his subordinate was unwarned, on landing, the U. S. Air Force crew was held temporarily by Greek military, the plane was searched, and the American Military Attache was summoned to Eleusis to identify the crew. As soon as this last was done, however, the crew was released, and the briefed Greek officer, on his return to Eleusis, took the necessary steps to ^{quickly} avoid further interest in the plane.

3. On receipt of the above information, EE-I immediately requested a full investigation and report on the reasons for the premature departure of the aircraft from Germany (WASH 14929, OUT 66897). () as instructed to evaluate the extent of the damage to the aircraft's cover and to take appropriate corrective measures.

4. Under () direction, the Greeks quickly quieted any further discussion of the incident. () himself discussed the matter with Colonel Wade, the Air Attache in Athens. To further insure that Colonel Wade would not feel it necessary to officially investigate the incident, () requested that General Lewis be asked to send Wade a cable enjoining him to drop further investigation of the incident and classifying all discussion of the plane as "Top Secret". The wording of the proposed cable was passed to () so that he could arrange for General Lewis' office to initiate ()

DOWN GRADE PER
CLASSIFICATION E NEW DIVISION
AIR 000 12M 1950

TOP SECRET

45797
COPY 3 OF 6 COPIES

TOP SECRET

- 2 -

SECURITY INFORMATION

5. On 18 September, this office received a preliminary report from [] (FRAN 987, IN 41624) which indicated that Air Force Headquarters in Frankfurt had, on its own authority, altered the scheduled hour of departure of the covert plane. Further confirmation of this was received from Athens [] (2791, IN 41936) when the crew Captain told [] that he had advised Major Harrold of General Lewis' office of the proposed advance in the time of departure and that Major Harrold made no objection.

6. A more complete report was received from [] on 21 September (MUNI 1793, IN 42068) in which he stated that he had asked Air Force Headquarters at least 48 hours prior notice of any proposed change in the scheduled departure time. On 11 September, [] received confirmation from Harrold that the take-off had been definitely fixed at midnight on 13 September as requested. [] confirmed this to Greece. However, it was not until noon on 13 September that Harrold telephoned [] using guarded language, to say that there had been a change in schedule. As a result of this observing of telephone security, there apparently resulted a mutual misunderstanding, [] understanding that the plane would now arrive on 14 September in the evening rather than in the early morning as scheduled. He immediately sent a priority cable to [] advising him of this delay. Unfortunately, Harrold had intended to convey that it was the evening of the 13th on which the plane would now arrive, and it must have been already airborne at the time of his call.

7. On the basis of a study of the cables, upon receipt of assurance that the covert aircraft was now under the excellent physical security of the Greek Service, and that, with the dispatch of a cable to Colonel Wade by General Lewis, no further investigation of the incident in Greece would be forthcoming, this office indicated to (WASH 15764, OUT 67827) that it was our feeling that he had done his best to coordinate the plane's departure time, and that the responsibility for the premature departure lay with U. S. Air Force Headquarters in Germany.

8. [] admirable handling of the incident, considered together with the primary operational importance of the covert aircraft itself to the FIEND and STAIR Projects and with the long preparation and pains-taking work that has been required to bring it in operational condition to its present location, precludes, in the opinion of this office, the need for any change in operational plans as a result of this incident.

[] Chief, EE-I

EE-I/WPjr/lb

cc: Orig & 1 - Addressee
#3, 4 - EE-I
5, 6 - Registry

TOP SECRET

45797
COPY 3 OF 6 COPIES